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YOUTH AND THE MEANING OF WORK

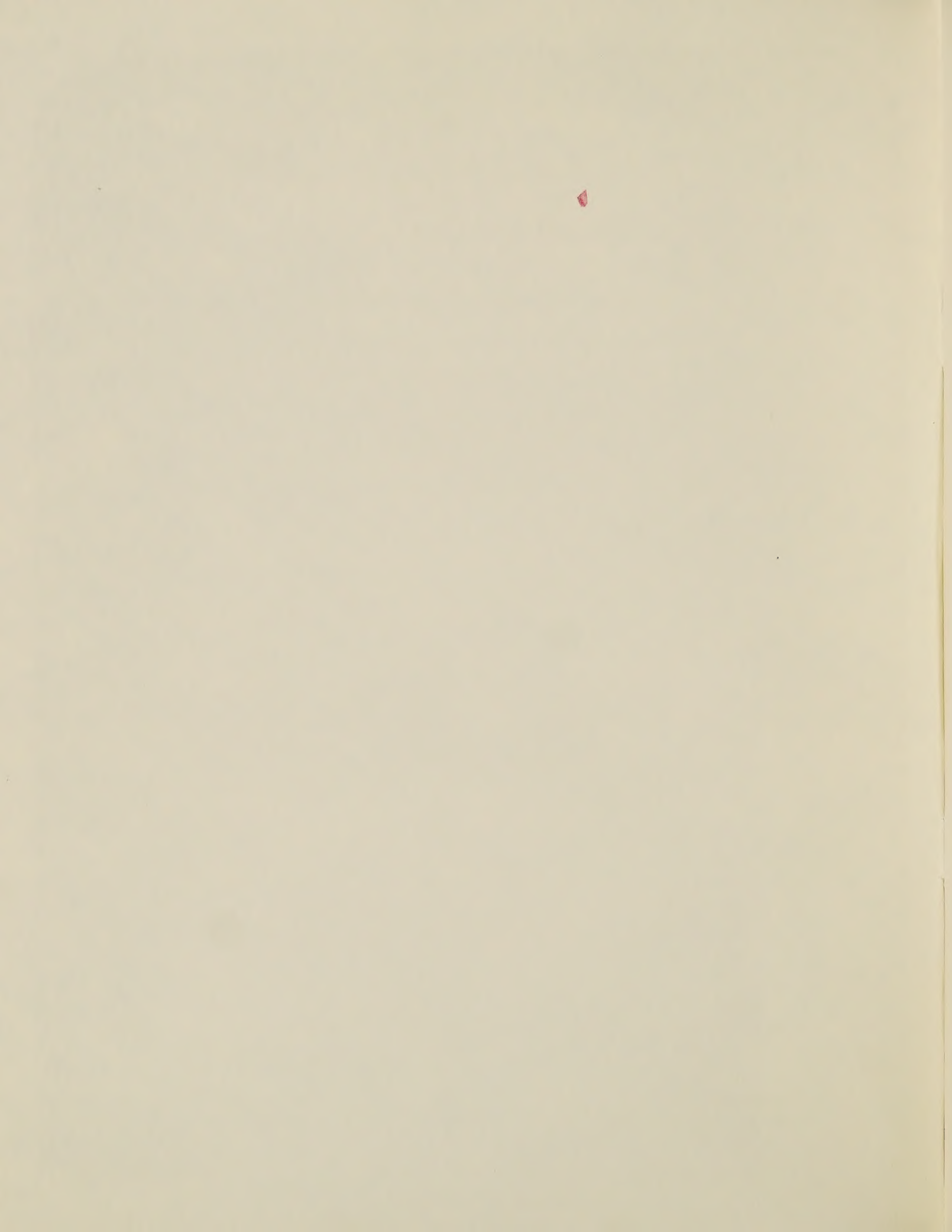
MANPOWER RESEARCH
MONOGRAPH NO. 32

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YOUTH AND THE MEANING OF WORK

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NO. 32**

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Peter J. Brennan, Secretary
Manpower Administration



1974

PREFACE

This monograph is based on the report of a study of 1,860 male and female graduating seniors (classes of 1972) from five different colleges and universities in Pennsylvania. 1/ At the time of the study the author, Dr. David Gottlieb, was a professor in the College of Human Development at the Pennsylvania State University and is presently in the Department of Sociology at the University of Houston.

Under a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, Office of Research and Development, this survey was conducted to determine the postcollege attitudes, aspirations, and expectations of contemporary college seniors concerning work and family life. A 1-year-later followup study is currently underway to assess the fit between senior year expectations and postcollege experiences.

Within the body of this monograph, it would be impossible to review the many variables which appear to be associated with the differences and similarities found within the sample. The focus here then is upon the work and family lifestyle expectations of those who have yet to enter the full-time job market and yet to experience postcollege lifestyles.

Pertinent tabulations and a description of the methodology are provided in the appendix.

1/ The full report, "Study Report: Youth and the Meaning of Work," may be obtained from the National Technical Information Service, 5825 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22151, at \$6 per copy. Specify accession No. PB 217360.

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INTRODUCTION

The central significance of work is a subject that has been studied and discussed by behavioral scientists, politicians, policy planners, employers, employees, those seeking employment, and those who have the responsibility for preparing the young for entrance into the job market. That work, work attitudes, and work behaviors are of critical importance to individuals, families, and the society has not been argued. The questions which have been raised and debated include whether attitudes toward work have changed and whether American society is confronted by a growing phenomenon of worker alienation.

This report on Youth and the Meaning of Work seeks to provide data which will contribute to understanding how a select group of American youth (graduating college seniors) perceive and feel about work.

American college students are not cut out of common cloth. They come to college for different reasons, and they respond to college experiences in different ways. They differ in personal values, as well as in political and religious orientations. They vary in their attitudes toward themselves and toward others. They are not necessarily alike in the importance they assign to work, in what they hope to achieve through their career activities, or in their reasons for seeking work. But there are also areas of consensus.

This report attempts to identify a number of background and demographic variables which contribute to both differences and similarities in the attitudes, values, and expectations of college seniors.

To contribute to the systematic study of American women, the study covered a sample divided almost equally between men and women. On almost every issue discussed, it analyzes data for differential impact upon men and women.

It is important to point out that this is not a study of how college seniors adjust to and feel about employment. It is a study of the perceptions, aspirations, attitudes, and expectations of young men and women who have not yet entered the job market. Many expect to enter graduate school; most expect full-time employment; and some are not quite certain what they will do--or want to--in the immediate future. How they will react to work, what kinds of employment they will find, how they will evaluate their work settings or their graduate

school experiences, and what relationships they will find between expectations and reality are all questions that must await completion of the current followup research.

Finally, a major purpose of this monograph is to provide data which might be useful to those who are committed to finding more humane, dignified, reliable, responsive, and honest ways of helping youth search for satisfying and productive work.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

The data collected, the variables analyzed, the points raised, and the conclusions drawn are too many and far too complex to summarize in detail. Rather, this section attempts to provide a feeling for and a sense of the data obtained from the graduating classes of 1972. The sample is sufficiently representative to make tentative generalizations; at the same time, methodological considerations dictate caution in making such generalizations.

The graduating classes of 1972 represent a highly selective population. Not a monolith, this group exhibits some significant differences, which appear to be related to the respondents' sex, socioeconomic status, and ethnic-religious orientation.

Sex is very closely associated with the schools students attend, the fields of study they enter, and the careers they anticipate. Women, despite the growing rhetoric of liberation and occupational mobility, are highly concentrated in a limited number of fields, most of which are regarded as women's work: School teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, nurses, and health profession technicians. Men are much more likely to anticipate enrollment in graduate school, while women are much more likely to anticipate immediate postcollege, full-time employment. Women expect to receive lower salaries than do men, even though their formal educational credentials and expected jobs are in more than a few cases similar to those of men.

Students of lower socioeconomic status are most likely to end up in college with the fewest academic offerings; they are most likely to enter fields which offer terminal baccalaureate degrees; and they are least likely to report post-college enrollment in professional or graduate schools. As a result, although these students do complete college, their access to higher status occupations and higher salaries is not equal to that of more affluent students.

Those students who see themselves as having no religious identification generally stand in greatest contrast to all other students in attitudes, values, and expectations. The students with no religion are more likely than others to see themselves as alienated or hostile. They are least accepting of the traditional work ethic and of the belief that work builds character or makes you a

better person. They tend to be least certain of what they want to do with their lives, and they express the greatest dissatisfaction with their college experiences. Even among those who report a current religious affiliation, however, there are interesting and significant variations. These differences are not washed by controlling socioeconomic status. In many cases, the differences between socioeconomic groups are not as great as those between students of different ethnic-religious orientations but similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

In work attitudes and perceptions of the most salient characteristics of work, students see themselves as being quite different from their parents. Two significant and striking differences emerge when students are asked to compare their work needs with those of their fathers. Students see themselves as being far less concerned than their fathers with earnings and security and much more concerned with the nature and purpose of the work. Students stress the more altruistic and intrinsic aspects of the job. They seek interesting work which will be useful to society and of benefit to others, will allow them to express individuality, and will enhance individual growth.

An analysis of the reflections and evaluations of the students suggests that most have generally favorable attitudes toward their college experience. Most, if they had to do it all again, would attend the same institution; less than 5 percent would chose not to attend college at all; and about 15 percent would not attend the institution from which they are graduating. More than a third would attend college but change their social experiences; about a fifth would change their academic major; and about a fourth would do it all the same way again. Many students feel their expectations or aspirations as to general intellectual and cognitive growth were fulfilled but those concerning job-skill training and self-development were not.

Analysis of the data and of the many personal interviews held with college seniors leads to anticipating a resurgence of family-centered life in American society. The surface form may well look no different from that which is now regarded as representative of the American middle class; the contrast will be found in the more private and less visible aspects of families. It appears that there will be greater emphasis upon the equality, rights, and individual needs of family members regardless of age or sex. There also may be more open relationships and willingness to deal with the many problems which arise when people live in constant and close proximity to one another.

It is concluded, then, that this generation of college seniors does not expect to neglect the problems of others or the problems of the society. At the same time, however, the first priority will be to one's self, one's family, and one's closest associates. This emphasis upon self and a small group of others is not the product of self-indulgence, denial of the needs of others, or the single-minded pursuit of affluence; rather, it represents what many people, par-

ticularly young people, see as the only effective and efficient way of retaining a feeling of self-worth, self-determination, and self-fulfillment in our society. The extent to which this turning inward reflects apathy, defeat, or perhaps personal indifference is impossible to ascertain.

A summary of the work-related data leads with the observation that the vast majority of the students express favorable attitudes toward work. Many have serious doubts about the quality and uniqueness of their job skills, and many feel that they have not been adequately prepared for the contemporary work market.

Despite expressed concerns about the current job market, most students assume that they will eventually find employment which will provide them with a reasonable income.

There appears to be an emerging work ethic which places a much greater demand upon work. The expectation is that work can and should be of greater significance to the individual and of greater value to the society. The higher and different expectations for the content and form of work probably signal a change in the expected fit between work and other life activities. Work, for many of these seniors, is not seen as an activity which should be separate or isolated from one's family or private life. Most students anticipate that family adjustments will be necessitated by work involvements. Work is viewed as being an integral part of one's total life. Again, work is not considered to be a means to an end, but rather as a potential source for enhancing self-sufficiency and family relationships. At the same time, work and career needs are not expected to take priority over family relationships. Occupational mobility will be sacrificed if it must come at the expense of family needs and desires.

In conclusion, it appears that the classes of 1972 hold a positive and fairly enthusiastic attitude toward work. Despite some apprehensions and self-doubts about the future, they are ready to begin work and pursue career goals. They hold high expectations for both work and their private lives. How realistic they are in their expectations and how successful they will be in achieving them remain open questions.

Some implications of these findings are considered in the concluding section of the monograph.

THE CLASSES OF 1972--A PROFILE

The purpose of this section is to sketch an overall picture of who the students are and what they are like.

The sample is made up of approximately equal numbers of students at each of the five Pennsylvania colleges except one rural State school, which had a small graduating class. Men and women are fairly equally represented in the overall sample. Over four-fifths of the students are either 21 or 22 years of age; only 5 percent are younger and about 12 percent are older. In contrast, only 65 percent of the seniors in a 1961 study were either 21 or 22; a full 30 percent were older. ^{1/} The racial makeup of the sample is nearly 90 percent white, with virtually all of the others being black. Most of the graduates (86 percent) plan to stay single until at least the fall of 1972. Six percent are already married and have children.

A comparison of the academic fields of respondents in the present and the 1961 study showed relatively few differences, and these few can be attributed to certain demographic differences in the samples.

Using a procedure very similar to that employed in the earlier study, the researchers developed an index of socioeconomic status (SES) by combining three variables--parents' income, father's education, and father's occupation--in such a way that four distinct SES categories were created. The income of the students' parents clearly centers on the \$10,000- to \$15,000-category. This is a rise in median income from the 1961 study, attributable primarily to economic inflation over the past decade. Neither father's occupation nor his education differed appreciably from the earlier study.

^{1/} A national study of graduating college seniors--Great Aspirations--was conducted by Dr. James A. Davis for the National Opinion Research Center in 1961. Where appropriate and feasible, comparisons were made between the 1961 NORC sample and the respondents in the current study.

Although not included in the SES index, religious preference and ethnicity were, in many cases, important predictor variables. While the 1961 study reported that at graduation 85 percent of the senior respondents still preferred the religion in which they were brought up, the present study shows that only 68 percent indicate a consistent religious preference.

The school attended by a respondent is strongly related to his field of study. It is far from clear, however, whether a student chooses a school to suit his field of study, chooses his field of study as the best of the alternatives presented at his school, or decides on his field of study for reasons related to such factors as SES and personality. It does seem clear, however, that the choice of a school is at least partially determined by the students' socioeconomic status, either directly or indirectly.

The self-reported work attitudes of the respondents appear to offer some encouraging data about how college seniors perceive the world of work. Relevancy and personal involvement in work seem to be the number one concern of the respondents (four of the top six items deal with these issues). Over 85 percent of the students respond positively to the statement "I like to work;" yet, in contrast, only half feel that "most people like to work." However, only 1 out of 5 feels that "my career will be the most important thing in my life." Even fewer agree that "work is nothing more than a way of making a living." Material gain as a primary goal in life is highly disdained. College seniors evidently feel that work is a very important dimension of life, offering them an opportunity to contribute their talents to others through activities which are meaningful and exciting to them. Nevertheless, it is not, in general, the most important dimension of their lives. Perhaps their priorities are such that private considerations would override the importance of work, as evidenced by the high positive response rate (over 80 percent) to the following statements: "My private life will not be sacrificed to make more money;" "I would not work for an organization that carried out policies I think are wrong;" and "The kind of work I do matters more than whether I do it for government, business, a university, or an independent organization."

SES and work attitude comparisons show very little direct relationship. Religious preference, however, is strongly related to work attitude. The two factors labeled "success oriented through hard work" and "I like to work" are very positively related to being Protestant, somewhat positively related to being Roman Catholic, somewhat negatively related to being a man of the Jewish faith, and highly negatively related to having no religious preference. Apparently, Protestants are still the most likely to hold the traditional work ethic, with Roman Catholics not too far behind. Besides being not nearly as work oriented as the other groups, those with no religious preference are by far the most likely to exhibit concerns over whether their jobs will be boring and uncreative and are evidently worried

about their job settings. There are several other interesting variations in work attitudes among some of the religious groups. Roman Catholic and Protestant women indicate the least concern about the factor labeled "worried about job setting." The attitude of the latter is probably best explained by the relatively large number of education majors who are Protestants. An explanation for the former variation is somewhat more of a puzzlement. Roman Catholic women are the only group to score positively on the factor labeled "job is not a way of life--just a way to earn money."

WHAT THEY BELIEVE

This portion of the monograph describes the attitudes, values, and perceptions of the students about a variety of issues, including desirable and undesirable characteristics of work and commitment to social change, and compares their attitudes with those of their fathers.

Although "work" undoubtedly has different meanings for different students, most agree that they do, to some degree, like to work. There is little variation among students of different SES backgrounds. Women are somewhat more likely than men to agree strongly with the statement that "I like to work."

Data on the relationship between work and other aspects of life make clear that, while most of the students are eager to begin and become involved in their careers, they do not place their careers above their desire to achieve and maintain strong family relationships. Work and careers are seen as more than a means to an end. What a person does in his work, the policies of the organization for which he works, the direct consequences of his work, and the impact of his work upon his private life are all critical issues for these young people. Most graduating seniors see work as an integral part, but not the most salient factor, of their lives.

As would be anticipated, men more often regard work as a central and salient part of life, but the difference is less than would be expected, given the continuous cultural and societal emphasis upon the man as the breadwinner and provider. Differences between men and women are minimal in their responses to the statement that "my private life will not be sacrificed to make more money": 89 percent of the women and 82 percent of the men agree. While SES differences are not substantial, more of both the men and the women of higher SES backgrounds agree with this statement.

Other responses to the questionnaire and personal interviews with students show that many of the seniors are uncertain as to what occupational success means. Clearly, monetary reward alone or the social prestige associated with a particular occupational role is not a primary criterion of success. A successful occupation tends to be seen as one in which the individual is able to satisfy a variety of personal needs while at the same time contributing something of value to society.

A large majority (91 percent of the women and 83 percent of the men) agree with the statement that "I assume I will have a good income; I'm more concerned

with finding a job where I will do relevant things." Salary expectations are generally lower for women than for men, and men regard money as more important, probably because they are more likely to see themselves as the primary source of family earnings. Women hold more altruistic help-oriented values than do men. Regardless of the sex differences, the vast majority of these college seniors seek careers which will enable them to perform individually and socially relevant functions.

What do students see as the least and most desirable characteristics of work? Both men and women tend to place less emphasis on the importance of money, social status, teamwork, and opportunities to exercise leadership. The need for freedom from supervision in one's work also is not stressed. There is however, a relatively strong desire for career security and stability. The ideal work situation is seen as one in which a person can engage in helpful and socially relevant activities while at the same time utilizing his special skills and abilities. Finally, respondents say they are concerned with finding work which offers opportunities for learning and advancement (see appendix table 1).

A similar sex consensus pattern is observed in the work characteristics which graduating seniors consider least important. Concern over the prestige and status attributed to a career is of least importance for the entire sample. The greatest discrepancy between men and women is 5 percent. Eighteen percent of the women--compared with 13 percent of the men--are least concerned about making a lot of money; and, as noted, women expect lower earnings than men. Men place less importance upon avoiding high-pressure jobs and working as part of a team. Among men, altruism tends to be most important to the lowest and highest SES groups. Opportunities for advancement are stressed primarily by mid-low SES men. These men are also highest in concerns over job security, while placing less emphasis upon being in a position which allows them to use their special abilities. Among women, the major differences occur between the lowest SES and the other three SES groups. Briefly, women of the lowest SES backgrounds appear to be most traditional in their attitudes toward and expectations for the type of work and lifestyle they will pursue.

A second series of items dealing with the most important aspects of a job provides information about how respondents' work-related attitudes compare with the work attitudes believed to be held by their fathers. While SES and sex do not determine the students' evaluations of the job characteristics important to themselves, significant differences occur in perceptions of job characteristics believed to be important to fathers. More men than women and more students from lower than from higher SES backgrounds rate job security and salary as their fathers' primary concerns. The explanation for these differences in perceptions is probably not complex. Boys would be likely to have the greater exposure to information about the dynamics of their fathers' work role. Despite changes in the occupational roles and status of women in our society, men are still considered to have primary responsibility for the financial support of the nuclear family. Hence, men would be more inclined to stress the security and financial aspects of both their own and their fathers' occupational roles.

Comparisons with the 1961 NORC sample suggest that there are marked differ-

ences in some attitudes. In the more private, less visible, and less apparent areas of life, the attitudes and values expressed by the 1972 respondents are at variance with those of the 1961 college seniors.

In the area of work, for example, the classes of 1972 place less importance on "making a lot of money" than did the seniors of 1961. They also appear to put less emphasis on the need to be "original and creative" and more on the utilization of special skills and abilities. They are less concerned with social prestige and status and more with a work setting where they can maintain their individuality. Finally, the 1972 respondents seem more committed to the belief that interpersonal relations and family relationships are not to be sacrificed or placed in a secondary position to a career or work.

The respondents believe that most contemporary college seniors are committed to changing some of the social ills of our society. Less than 5 percent see today's college students as "not at all committed"; 23 percent feel that contemporary college students are "very committed" and 72 percent that they are "somewhat committed." Two-thirds feel that student commitment to resolving social problems is stronger now than it was 10 years ago.

With regard to sex role equality, 4 out of every 5 students believe that men and women have equal capabilities and therefore should have equal opportunities. However, a large share qualify this belief: 82 percent think that women lack physical strength, 43 percent that they are more emotional than men, and 36 percent that they have different thinking patterns; and the students see these characteristics as obstacles to real sexual equality. About a fifth of the respondents take the position that men and women are not really equal; rather they are different and should have different jobs.

The majority of the 1972 respondents also believe that they will be able to achieve their concept of the good life. At the same time, less than a fifth feel that the good life is easily attainable.

Two sets of items were used to assess the personal and external factors which students perceive as potential barriers to the attainment of personal goals.

The personal factor responses indicate that the respondents are less concerned with personal ability and training than with problems of "getting it all together." The barrier item most frequently selected deals with apprehensions about lack of opportunity and getting the right breaks. This item is closely followed by one concerning a lack of clear and positive aims. Personal problems rank third highest. No doubt these three items are interrelated and reflect the doubt some students feel about their futures. Many students feel that they were forced to choose a career before they were really prepared to make that decision. At the time they completed the questionnaire, many were also concerned about their job. Finally, a large number are experiencing difficulties in establishing an acceptable fit between their personal lifestyle preferences and the realities of the postcollege adult world.

On only one external factor item--overpopulation--do the responses differ significantly by sex and socioeconomic status. Among men, this item shows no significant variation by SES. For women, the proportion selecting overpopulation as a barrier increases markedly as SES rises--from 26 percent to 44 percent.

LIFESTYLE PREFERENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

This section attempts to describe the expressed lifestyle preferences and expectations of the sample of graduating seniors studied.

As might be expected, a majority of the respondents intend to be married within 5 years; however, more than half of those who plan to marry do not intend to start families within that time period. The traditional pattern of marriage, in which the wife works only a short time or not at all and then begins relatively immediate childbearing, does not appear to be the typical picture. Rather, the women anticipate prolonged periods of employment both before and after marriage, and many intend to defer childbearing to some time well in the future.

Respondents were asked what they perceive to be the ideal relationship between work and family. Over half (56 percent) selected the following alternative: "I expect that it will be necessary for my family and my homelife to be somewhat affected by and to adapt to my career needs." This is probably a realistic assessment of the work-family pattern normally displayed by American families. Thirty-one percent responded, "I don't expect my career work to interfere with or influence my relationship with my family or my homelife." This expectation suggests a high degree of privatism (separation of "outside" activities from those of the home) and provides yet another indication of the importance that these students attribute to their family life. Only 3 percentage points separate the responses of men and women on these two items.

When comparing their own lifestyle preferences with those of their parents, 40 percent of the students indicate that they prefer "a lifestyle quite unlike that of my parents," while 32 percent report they prefer a lifestyle "very similar to that of my parents." The responses do not vary significantly by sex but clearly are related to SES.

Students from homes which have been economically comfortable are far more likely to state that they prefer lifestyles either "very similar" to that of their parents or else "somewhat similar to parents but without the need for so many material goods and possessions": these responses are given by 60 percent of the men and 55 percent of the women in the highest SES group, compared with 30 percent of the men and 39 percent of the women in the lowest SES.

Analysis of the desired type of lifestyle by field of study reveals statistically significant differences for both men and women. Students most likely to

report the desirability of their parents' lifestyle are in the fields of agriculture (56 percent), engineering (44 percent), education (40 percent), and the physical sciences (37 percent). Those least likely to make such a choice are in the social sciences (28 percent), psychology (23 percent), and the humanities (22 percent).

Analysis of critical lifestyle characteristics shows little difference between the sexes in the high priority they give to good family relationships, supported by a degree of economic comfort and good friends (see appendix table 2). Men are slightly more likely to be concerned with the pursuit of their own interests. While socioeconomic background is associated with some statistically significant differences in employment-related measures (for example, concern with job challenge, steady employment, and meaningful work), field of study appears to have greater impact. Among both men and women, students with certain majors stress particular items. For example, education majors emphasize the importance of steady employment and majors in the social sciences and psychology, meaningful work.

The three lifestyle elements the students "most liked" are "quality of human relationships," "happy family," and "semiopen and flexible family-friend relationships." Factors which produced the strongest negative responses are "communal lifestyle," "solitude," "enough goods," and "emphasis on acquisition." The students are highly consistent both in giving highest priority to good family relationships and in placing a low value on money and material possessions.

THE WORLD OF WORK AND CAREERS

This section focuses more specifically upon the post college plans and career expectations of the classes of 1972. From the data collected in this research and from evidence obtained in other research dealing with career outcomes, it is apparent that diverse variables influence career and work choices. Both psychological and sociological factors contribute to how people view themselves and how they go about the business of selecting and then attaining a particular career setting.

An examination of the relationship of certain personal values and a variety of sociological factors to career preferences begins with an analysis of the major fields of study of the respondents. The proportions enrolled in various fields and comparable data for the 1961 NORC sample are:

Major field	Percent of--	
	1972 sample	1961 sample
Education	35	27
Social sciences	14	8
Physical and biological sciences.	12	12
Humanities	11	16
Psychology	7	3
Business administration	6	13
Engineering	6	9
Health professions	3	4
Agriculture	(<u>1</u> /)	(<u>1</u> /)

1/

Less than 1 percent.

The differences seem to be more a function of differences in certain demographic characteristics of the two student populations than an indication of changes in the general career orientation of students. The 1972 sample has a greater proportion of women and of blacks than did the 1961 sample; both groups tend to have sizable proportions in education and the social sciences and be underrepresented in business administration and engineering.

Sex is very strongly associated with major field enrollment. A little more than half of all women in the 1972 sample are in education; the humanities, psychology, and the (social sciences) are also major with comparatively large proportions of women (see appendix table 3). SES appears to have its impact before enrollment in college, by limiting freedom in choice of school and restricting knowledge of career alternatives for those from lower SES backgrounds.

Many students in each of the five sample schools believe that they were forced to make a career choice earlier than they would have preferred. Generally, more of the women than of the men say that they did not modify their career plans between the time they entered college and the time they selected their academic major. Men more often report that they had no specific career plans at the time they entered college. The data suggest that women express greater career stability because they perceive a narrower range of choices and place less emphasis on career choice since many expect to be out of the labor market for long periods of time.

Generally, the lower the SES background of the student, the less likely he is to change his career plans. This relationship applies regardless of sex or field of study. Changes in career expectations and academic fields of study can be costly to the student in both time lost and expenses encountered if the newly selected field demands postcollege professional training.

Change and stability in career expectations are also associated with field of study. Comparatively few students change career choices from those fields--education and engineering--which are highly structured and single career oriented and in which the baccalaureate degree is sufficient qualification for employment. The lower incidence of change in career expectations among students in education and engineering is reinforced by their generally lower SES status.

Contrasts in work value orientations between men and women and between fields of study were:

Success oriented through hard work: Most positively related to women in education, a large proportion of whom are from lower SES backgrounds, including most of the blacks as well as a significant number of whites from German-Protestant families. Most negative for men and women in the humanities.

A job is not a way of life--just a way to make money: Most positive for men in business administration and engineering. Highly negative for men in the biological sciences and humanities.

Worried about job being boring and uncreative; no useful guidance: Most positive for women in the humanities, almost 60 percent of whom are from the two highest SES groups. As indicated earlier, women from the highest SES groups report the strongest orientation toward more nontraditional female roles and career preferences.

Private life is more important than a job; unmaterialistic; antibusiness: Most positive for women in psychology. Also important to women in the humanities. More than two-thirds of the women in psychology are from the two highest SES groups. Lowest for men in business administration.

Worried about job setting: Most positive for men in the biological sciences and men and women in the humanities. Most negative for men in the physical and social sciences.

I like work--working will make me a better person: Most positive for men in agriculture. Most negative for both men and women in the humanities and "other" fields.

During the first postcollege year, if there were no restraints, most college graduates would rather be doing something other than what they actually expect to be doing. The majority would prefer to travel and have an opportunity to get away from it all--"if even for only a few days." In the personal interviews, students again and again expressed a need for rest and recuperation. The desire for a period of freedom from obligations before going back to a structured and demanding way of life was a prevalent theme.

Comparisons of preferences with expectations show a number of interesting contrasts. For both sexes, travel and the pursuit of one's own interests decline sharply when preferences are matched with expectations, while work and graduate study show increases. As mentioned earlier, a greater proportion of men than women anticipate graduate school.

In contrast, most women anticipate employment of one kind or another. Almost three-fourths (71 percent) expect to be employed (61 percent in a job related to their field and 10 percent in an unrelated job). Less than half (48 percent) of the men anticipate employment (37 percent in a field-related job and 11 percent in an unrelated job). Men are more than twice as likely as women to indicate graduate school plans (27 percent, compared with 12 percent), no matter what their field of study. Biological science majors--men and women--are highest in indicating immediate entrance into graduate training. Men are slightly more likely than women to indicate that they are not sure what they will be doing after graduation. Likewise, humanities majors appear to be more uncertain of their immediate plans than students in other fields.

The impact of sex and field of study can also be observed in an analysis of the respondents' salary expectations. Each respondent was asked to cite his full-time annual salary expectations for his first job after he has completed all his formal education, for 5 years later, and for 10 years later. At each time, the expected salaries of men are higher than those of women.

In each field of study, women expect to earn less on the first job than do men. The lowest expectations are held by men and women in the field of education; 59 percent of the men and 76 percent of the women anticipate annual salaries of less than \$8,000 on their first jobs. The highest expectations are held by men in the biological sciences (15 percent expect to earn more than \$20,000 per year). The only group with no expectations of earning less than \$8,000 are men in the health professions.

Salary expectations after 5 years show similar sex differential patterns. Regardless of field of study, women continue to lag behind the men. The highest proportions of men expecting salaries of more than \$20,000 are in the biological sciences (31 percent), in the health professions (22 percent), and engineering (15 percent). The lowest 5-year salary expectations are held by women in education, the humanities, psychology, and "other" majors. The men with the lowest expectations are the education majors, although a larger proportion of men in the humanities expect salaries of less than \$8,000 per year. At the higher end of the salary range, 18 percent of the women in business administration anticipate salaries in excess of \$15,000 per year.

Particularly for men, there appears to be a fairly consistent fit between work attitude orientation and salary expectations. Men are more likely than women to perceive that they do have some personal control over their future earnings. Men who expect lower salaries tend to have an overall orientation which minimizes the importance of both earnings and belief in the traditional work ethic. Women's lower salary expectations less often reflect personal values and choice.

The type of employer for whom the students expected to work on their first full-time job was, not surprisingly, most often an elementary or secondary school system (35 percent), reflecting the large number of education majors in the sample. Private companies are selected by approximately one-fourth (27 percent) of the sample (with two-thirds of this group anticipating employment in large organizations). Hospitals and social welfare agency settings account for 9 percent of the choices and college and university settings for 7 percent. Another 7 percent expect to be employed in State or local government positions, and 5 percent expect to be self-employed (see appendix table 4).

The apparent precision of the salary and career setting expectations masks a good deal of uncertainty and ignorance about the job market. In answer to the question "When you selected your college major, how aware were you of the job market for your chosen field?" students reported as follows: 39 percent were "very aware"; 43 percent, "not too aware"; and 18 percent, "not at all aware."

While differences in job market awareness do not vary significantly by sex, they do vary by field of study. Students in the health professions and engineering indicate the greatest awareness of the job market and those in the physical sciences, psychology, social sciences, and the humanities the least. When students are asked to comment upon job opportunities in their field of study, they respond in fairly vague and general terms.

Regardless of the source or reliability of their job market information, most graduating seniors (68 percent) believe that fewer jobs are available in their field now than when they made their career selection. Nineteen percent think that the job market for them has stayed approximately the same. Only 5 percent believe that more jobs are now available. Even though the students were questioned only a few weeks before graduating, 8 percent report that they "don't know" what employment patterns have been in their field.

Sex is linked with significant differences in perceptions of the current job market. More women than men (71 percent to 64 percent) see a shrinking job market in their particular career.

Respondents who did not expect to enter graduate school in the 1972 fall term were asked, "Which of the following best describes your postcollege graduation job situation?" The answers of the 1,356 students who responded were:

- 31 percent had seriously sought but had not found a postgraduation job.
- 7 percent had seriously sought but had not found a postgraduation job which they were willing to accept.
- 23 percent had found a postgraduation job.
- 39 percent had neither seriously sought nor found a post-graduation job.

Among those who sought jobs, almost two-thirds had not found them. Of the 310 who did find postcollege work, 58 percent said they were very pleased with their jobs, 33 percent were somewhat pleased, and the remaining 9 percent were not very pleased.

Clear majorities of the college seniors perceive a shrinking job market; and do not have firm employment commitments a few weeks before graduation. Yet regardless of whether they had sought or obtained employment, nearly half (48 percent) of the respondents make clear that they would be "very concerned" if they were unable to obtain a job immediately after college graduation. Another 44 percent report that they would be "somewhat concerned"; only 8 percent say they would "not be concerned at all."

Most students would encounter serious financial difficulties if they were unable to find full-time employment soon after graduation. The greatest concern over the future is expressed by those students of lower SES backgrounds. At the same time, the data make very clear that few students intend to sit idly by waiting for "the job" to fall into their laps. The majority would be willing to take

any job while they search for the work which comes closest to fulfilling their work preferences and expectations. A fairly large number would be willing to take a job in another field, even if it meant they were unable to utilize the skills they had learned in college. The major barriers these students see as preventing them from obtaining the work they seek are the perceived "tight job market" and the difficulty of finding work with "desirable job characteristics."

Women are more likely than men to express concern about the tight job market and, as would be expected, to mention the potential barriers of sex discrimination. Men are more apt to state that "not knowing what I want to do" is a potential barrier to finding the work they seek. Again, since women have fewer job opportunities and lower mobility, they are less likely to be uncertain about the kind of work they seek and the kind they can find.

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

This section presents data on a variety of items dealing specifically with the respondents' college experience. The students in the study were asked, "How influential were the following people in your decision concerning the selection of your college major?" Contrary to expectations, academic advisers are, in fact, the least frequently reported decisionmaking resource. Similarly, parental influence is slight. A "person in my chosen field" is the most frequently mentioned influence (26 percent).

The findings suggest that, regardless of who influenced these college students, many feel that they selected their field of study and career prematurely. Early decision on field of study is influenced by the student's sex and SES and by the nature of the field. Women are more likely than men to indicate that they selected their college major and career sooner than they retrospectively would have chosen to do so. Both men and women of lower socioeconomic status report early decisions more frequently than do the upper SES groups. While these lower SES students also report that they think these decisions should be made within the first 2 years of college, this congruence is very likely brought about by the limited number of career alternatives available to them. It would appear that the fewer the perceived alternatives, the less inclined the student is to believe that his career choice should be delayed.

The highest percentages of students reporting they settled on their career and college major selections within the first 2 years are in education, the health professions, business administration, and engineering.

When asked about sources of financial support, nearly three-fourths of the respondents reported at least some financial aid from their parents, in most cases supplemented by various other income sources. The most substantial additional contributions come from the students' part-time and/or summer employment and from scholarships and grants. Usually, these sources are clearly secondary and contribute less than half of the financial support needed. When students have insufficient funds after pooling parental and other contributions, they are most likely to resort to various loans available to students.

Of those relatively few students who indicate parental support of 90 percent or more, most are women. In fact, women are more likely than men not only to report parental aid, but also to report more aid. This finding is somewhat surprising, because the women tend to come from lower SES homes than do the men. Apparently, this tendency is less important than the parental tradition of more

prolonged financial and emotional responsibility for daughters than for sons and the daughters' lower earnings from part-time or summer employment.

All respondents were asked their primary reason for seeking a college education. The most frequent response (37 percent) reflects a concern for future occupational or educational plans ("career, job training"). While the reasons given do vary with sex, SES, school, and field of study, in general the students approached their college educations with the primary intention of acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for the career of their choice.

Therefore, it is ironic that the majority report that their college experience has provided "not much in the way of skills, but exposure to ideas."

For most students, the formal education process has consisted of the completion of a series of tasks designated, for the most part, by someone else. The student must provide some form of evidence that he has fulfilled the requirements and expectations of the individual faculty member, his college major, and the licensing institution. In general, regardless of the size or location of their college, students have had little personal contact with faculty, academic advisers, or other adult members of the academic community. Nevertheless, most students indicate that they would still select the school from which they are graduating if they were to do it all again. Only a handful appear angry or extremely disenchanted with their college or university. This lack of discontent may have several explanations. These are students who, regardless of their own expectations or personal views, have decided to remain within the formal educational system. Additionally, students apparently do not believe there are many real differences between colleges, at least in the more formal educational procedures and practices. They may see obvious differences in such factors as student population size, the kinds of students attending a college, institutional rules and regulations, and how "hard" or how "easy" the formal academic requirements are. But at the same time, they tend to feel that all colleges and universities are pretty much alike when it comes to the actual process of educational achievement.

Finally, most students have been taught to believe that college is really a means to an end. With the escalation of educational credentials and a job market which places more and more emphasis upon technological skills, fresh knowledge, and communication facility as well as personal skills, a college degree is seen as a must--like it or not.

ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOSITY

In some instances, as noted earlier, ethnic-religious orientation is a better predictor of orientation and work-related attitudes than is socioeconomic background, although the two are intertwined. Most of the black students (85 percent) come from the lowest SES families, whereas Jews and Anglo-Saxon Protestants have the largest proportions in the highest SES (27 and 33 percent, respectively). Generally, Catholic students are from less affluent families than are Protestants, but among both Catholics and Protestants, SES differs by ethnicity. More German Protestants than Slavic Protestants are of mid-high or very high SES. Among Catholics, Irish respondents are twice as likely as Polish ones to be from mid-high or very high SES families.

Sex role attitudes differ significantly between men and women and among men and women of different ethnic-religious orientations. For both men and women, Jews most often express nontraditional views. Among men, blacks rank second in nontraditional attitudes (57 percent), while German Catholics rank lowest (16 percent). Among women, Polish Catholics and Scandinavian Protestants tie for second place (at 77 percent) in holding nontraditional sex role attitudes, and German Catholics are least likely to hold such attitudes (53 percent).

A summary of the relationship between ethnic-religious orientation and work attitude position indicates the following:

Success oriented through hard work

Highest: Male and female German Protestants.

Lowest: Men and women with no current religious preference.

A job is not a way of life--just a way to make money

Highest: Irish-Catholic women.

Lowest: Anglo-Saxon Protestant women.

Worried about job being boring and uncreative

Highest: Men and women with no current religious preference.

Lowest: Anglo-Saxon Protestant and Jewish men.

Private life is more important than a job; unmaterialistic; antibusiness

Highest: Men and women with no current religious preference.

Lowest: Men and women blacks.

Worried about job setting

Highest: Irish-Catholic women and men and women with no current religious preference.

Lowest: Male and female blacks.

I like to work--working will make me a better person

Highest: German-Protestant men and women; Anglo-Saxon Protestant men.

Lowest: Jewish men; men and women with no current religious preference.

COMMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The data presented in this monograph suggest a number of areas in which consideration should be given to both programmatic and policy changes in the work preparation of college youth.

The data do make clear that the sex, color, and socioeconomic background of a student can play an important part in his educational and occupational equality.

Students from poor families, first-generation college goers in general, and black students more specifically have limited opportunities for occupational mobility, even when they hold baccalaureate degrees. As the data show, lower income students are very likely to enroll in colleges with the fewest alternative fields of study. Furthermore, they are much more likely than middle-income students to go to colleges with terminal fields of study unrelated to graduate work. The opportunity to complete college, while it does enhance occupational status, does not provide equal access to the more prestigious, more challenging, and better paying occupations.

Similarly, traditional career expectations for women, held by those who socialize the young, are neither appropriate nor adequate for a society which articulates a commitment to educational and occupational equality. Young women, as the data indicate, are in growing numbers demanding access to careers which have traditionally been perceived as the male domain. Increasing numbers are no longer content to limit themselves to part-time work, to work in education and health services, to work which does not offer the same rewards as those open to men. If the goal of American society is to provide equal educational and occupational opportunities, then both the content and process of our youthful socialization process must be altered.

Women and first-generation college goers need access to financial resources which will allow them, if they choose, to select among a wider range of educational institutions and a wider range of academic majors. These students need counseling, both before and during college, so they will become more aware of the educational and career alternatives available to them. They also need financial and counseling resources which will encourage them to continue their educations beyond the baccalaureate level.

Most important perhaps, those directly involved in the education of the young need to abandon certain attitudes and expectations concerning the "appropriate" career setting for women and for students of lower income status.

The data also make clear that, whatever their sex, race, or socioeconomic background, many graduating seniors feel that their career selections were not made in any systematic or reasonable fashion. Rather, they believe they were forced to make career-related choices to meet the requirements of the college process, which insists upon the declaration of an academic major even though the student may not be prepared to make such a commitment. It is also apparent that many students "fall into" rather than select a field of study. Too often career choices are made with very little knowledge about the salient dimensions and consequences of such a choice.

College personnel seem to assume that someone somewhere has in fact provided the student with the information needed to make reasonable career-related decisions. The data suggest that such is rarely the case; indeed, many students have only a vague understanding of the content and structure of the careers for which they are headed. It also appears that many faculty members of both secondary schools and colleges believe that matters of career choice, career information, and career training are neither the legitimate nor the appropriate responsibility of our educational institutions. At the same time, the majority of students come to college with the expectation that they will be provided with career information and essential career skills.

This research would certainly suggest that both the high school and the college should go beyond informal and infrequent counseling sessions, to implement specific programs directed at providing students with necessary career information. Consideration should be given to the development of courses and programs which deal exclusively with career data and career training.

A critical finding of this research is that the majority of college seniors do hold positive attitudes toward work. Their prevailing work ethic places high expectations upon work and careers. They see work as much more than a means to earn money, as a means to an end, as a means of attaining social prestige, or as a means of fulfilling societal expectations. Their ethic includes the strong belief that work must be individually satisfying and at the same time of real value to the society. The expectations for work and careers are not considered separate or apart from other important aspects of the individual's life. Work is considered an essential part of one's life, but not the most salient or critical element. Individual and familial relationships, according to most respondents, are not to be sacrificed for occupational success or mobility; rather, work and family are expected to blend together in some meaningful and satisfying manner.

Unfortunately, many will view the high expectations of college youth as unrealistic. The immediate reaction will be to suggest that these young people are terribly naive and their expectations for the future should be brought into line as quickly as possible.

On the contrary, this writer would propose that every effort should be made to alter work and work settings in such a manner that these high expectations could, in fact, be realized. Such a strategy suggests that concerted efforts be

made to develop work situations in which the individual is allowed to fulfill his needs both for a sense of individual growth and for making a contribution of some authentic value to society. It also implies that potential employers should think in terms of work and career systems which take into consideration not only the needs of the individual but also the needs and expectations of the individual's family.

Worker alienation and disenchantment with work represent a serious, if largely unmeasured, problem in our society. But such alienation and disenchantment are neither natural nor automatic phenomena. If nothing else, this research makes it very clear that, at least before entering the job market, the majority of college seniors are neither alienated from nor disenchanted with work. Their expressed work attitudes and expectations reflect both commitment and enthusiasm. They are eager to begin their careers, and they are eager for their work effort to make a significant contribution to the Nation. The emphasis then should be not upon altering the attitudes and expectations of these youth, but rather upon establishing career settings which will take advantage of the energies, commitments, and expectations these college seniors bring with them into the postcollege work world.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Selection of the Schools

The selection of schools was influenced by the intention to obtain a respondent sample which would reflect a wide range of demographic variables (home-town location; parents' income, education, and occupation; college major; sex; race; etc.) and hence a potentially wide range of attitudinal and expectancy variables in areas such as work-related concerns, evaluations of the college experience, political affiliations, and lifestyle preferences.

Because different types of educational institutions typically attract differing types of students, the schools themselves were selected for their variety. The schools vary in location (one large urban university, one large rural university, two small rural schools, and one small near-urban college). They also vary in the typical socioeconomic status of the student population. One has students who usually come from middle to upper income homes and are frequently the children of college graduates. Two (one predominantly white and one predominantly black) typically enroll students of middle to lower income backgrounds, and these students are usually the first generation of their families to enroll in and complete college. At the two large universities, the students' backgrounds range from urban ghetto to affluent white families. The five educational institutions also differ in courses and academic majors offered.

The Sample

Although most studies of youth have concentrated on the male population, one basic objective of this survey was to obtain data from equal numbers of men and women in the graduating class of 1972.

The sample was obtained through a systematic random selection process at the four schools whose population sizes were sufficiently large to be appropriate for this procedure. The fifth school's senior enrollment was so small that the total senior population was approached for this study.

Participation Results

Overall, the response rate was 86 percent. The total number of question-

naires distributed was 2,162, and the number returned and utilized was 1,860--910 from male and 950 from female respondents.

The Survey Instruments

The primary research instrument was a pencil and paper questionnaire designed specifically for this study and distributed to the 2,162 graduating seniors. Information was sought on: (1) Work-related variables; (2) perception of the college experience and its contribution to the work expectations, abilities, and alternatives of the individual; (3) lifestyle characteristics; and (4) personal characteristics such as sex, age, race, socioeconomic status, and field of study.

Analysis of 150 personal interviews conducted at the five campuses facilitated initial development of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Much of the data analysis provided in this research was generated through the utilization of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, devised by Norman H. Nie, Dale H. Bent, and C. Hadlai Hull in conjunction with the Political Science Department at Stanford University. Several other subroutines from the library of The Pennsylvania State University Computation Center were employed but only to a minimal degree. The indexes constructed and utilized in the study were the Socioeconomic Status Index, Religious Fall Index, Rating of Sex Role Attitude Index, Ethnic Background (religion and nationality) Index, The Self-Reported Personality Characteristics Indices, and The Work Attitudes Indices.

APPENDIX B: STATISTICS

TABLE 1. SEX AND MOST/LEAST IMPORTANT WORK CHARACTERISTICS

[Percent distribution]

Work characteristic	Most important		Least important	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total: Number	901	935	883	925
Percent	100	100	100	100
Opportunities to be helpful;				
useful to society	17	33	3	1
Chance to use my special abilities	17	21	1	-
Stable/secure future	14	11	2	2
Chance to learn new things	12	13	1	1
Opportunity for advancement	8	3	1	2
Variety in work assignments	6	6	1	-
Avoiding high pressure	5	4	12	8
Freedom from supervision	4	2	7	5
Friendly coworkers	3	3	-	1
Making a lot of money	3	1	13	18
Chance to exercise leadership	3	1	5	8
Chance to engage in leisure activities.	3	2	2	3
Chance to contribute to important				
decisions	3	-	2	4
Working as part of team	1	-	10	6
High prestige social status	1	-	40	42

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

TABLE 2. FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS
DEFINING DESIRED LIFESTYLE

[Percent distribution]

Lifestyle characteristic	No. 1 factor	No. 2 factor	No. 3 factor	Combined
Total: Number	1,819	1,815	1,812	---
Percent	100	100	100	---
Good family relationships	52	12	6	70
Freedom to pursue own interests ..	11	12	13	36
Favorable geographical location ..	-	4	11	15
Good friends	6	18	21	45
Freedom from financial worry	10	19	15	44
A challenging job	6	12	8	26
Steady, secure employment	6	10	8	24
Opportunities for meaningful work	7	12	11	30
Access to art institutes, music, theaters, etc.	1	1	7	9
Other	1	-	-	1

TABLE 3. SEX AND MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY

[Percent distribution]

Major field of study	Sex	
	Male	Female
Total: Number	902	938
Percent	100	100
Agriculture	1	-
Biological science	6	5
Business administration	12	2
Education	18	51
Engineering	13	1
Health professions	1	4
Humanities	10	12
Physical science	8	4
Psychology	5	8
Social science	21	8
Other	6	5

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

TABLE 4. ANTICIPATED WORK SETTING AND TYPE OF EMPLOYER

[Percent distribution]

Setting-employer	Both sexes
Total: Number	1,848
Percent	100
Elementary-secondary school system	35
Private company--more than 100 employees	18
Hospital, church, clinic, welfare-social service	9
Private company--less than 100 employees	9
College-university	7
State-local government	7
Self-employed	5
Federal Government	4
Research organization	3
Other	4

Note: Detail does not add to total because of rounding.

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